

Consumers Petroleum

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Hi my name is Michelle Robert from Consumers Petroleum located in Trumbull, Ct. I am here to testify in opposition to HB 5344, HB 5313 and SB 321. Consumers is a family owned company that was founded in 1936 by the Wiehl family. I have been employed by Consumers for 25 years and I reside in Milford. I currently manage the service and maintenance facilities of our wholesale and retail gasoline operations for an excess of 60 sites in Connecticut and New York.

During tropical storm Sandy we had 50% of our company operated stores without power and 25% of our independent dealer customers that were also without power. After day 2 that was cut in half – after 5 days we had only few stores without power.

I researched generators at that time. Unfortunately, the generator I needed to run a store that was without power for over a week needed a 3 phase 400 amp generator. Not easy to find. Too expensive to rent and install.

I am not an expert on margins and how many cents per gallon we would need to make to cover the costs of purchasing and installing a generator – so I cannot speak on that.

Most newer stations that offer more than just gasoline have different electric needs. These stations would not just run on a generator that you can find on aisle 9 at home depot.

From the research that I did - Depending on type of service if I needed a 600 amp 3 phase generator with transfer switch to transfer automatically the cost would be in excess of \$50,000 and for a 400 amp 3 phase service - \$30,000.

We would need to also include pouring a concrete pad. We need to consider local regulations and permitting. We would need to dig a trench to the building then connect it to propane or natural gas. Questions would arise about should it be a manual connection that we would need to hire an electrician or should it automatically switch over. In addition to setup and installation, routine maintenance and testing would need to be managed, scheduled and paid for. And with all this ongoing maintenance costs would be an additional burden to my company.

I also considered a mobile unit that could power every and any store – which is probably impossible – but then each site would need a transfer switch already installed – the question of permitting comes into play – then at least the \$45,000 generator and electrician to connect and disconnect. Plus the truck to haul it. And that's is if we are even able to contact an electrician during a storm or emergency.

Other things to consider:

- In our markets, all patrons needed to do is drive within few miles and find gas station that is open.
- Supply was short during this time and power was out to some terminals make it nearly impossible to obtain fuel.
- Also in the days following Sandy – diesel was hard to come by that would power these generators.
- Even if a generator was in place, most likely the phone or internet service would be down making it impossible to process credit cards – which accounts for 80% of sales.

Even though managing all these sites without power was very difficult, I believe that mandating generators would not be economically possible. Many long lines were a result of panic and lack of communication.

At the end of the day, mandating that generators are installed at every gas station in CT would not solve the problem that this legislation seek to address. Supply shortages, distribution problems resulting for terminal colures would sill exist regardless of a requirement to have a generator. If we cant get fuel from the terminal then it does the public no good to require family owned business to make significant investments that ultimately result in the same out – NO GAS FOR THE PUBLIC TO PURCHASE.

On behalf of Consumer Petroleum we ask the General Law Committee to oppose HB 5344, HB 5313 and SB 321.

Thank you.